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Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of 47 members of the Human Rights Council

Note verbale dated 8 May 2006 from the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretariat

The Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretariat of the United Nations and has the honour to enclose the Islamic Republic of Iran's voluntary pledges and commitments in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251 of 15 March 2005 entitled "Human Rights Council" and under agenda item 112 (e).

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Annex to the note verbale dated 8 May 2006 from the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretariat

The Islamic Republic of Iran's pledges and commitments on human rights

The Islamic Republic of Iran, as a founding member of the United Nations and a party to the major International Human Rights Instruments, based on principles enshrined in its Constitution and in full compliance with its International commitments has continuously put the great efforts into safeguarding the status and inherent dignity of human person as well as promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

These target-oriented efforts and policies entail, inter-alia, measures designed to overcome obstacles and difficulties hindering the full and effective enjoyment of all human rights at national and international levels.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is therefore firmly determined and prepared to maximally utilize its potentials and capacities including its membership to the newly established Human Rights Council for achieving the noble and common objectives of international community in this domain.

"1) International Contribution, pledges and Commitments

1.1. List of International Human rights Instruments

a) the list of International Human rights Instruments to which the Islamic Republic of Iran is a party:

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination;
- Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide;
- International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid;
- International Convention against Apartheid in Sport;
- Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery;

Convention relating to the Status of Refugees;

- Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees;
- ILO no. 182 Convention Concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor;

b) The Islamic Republic of Iran is also considering accession to the following International Human Rights Instruments:

- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;
- Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment and Punishment;
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography;

c) Islamic Republic of Iran is reconsidering its reservation to the Convention on the Rights of the Child;

1.2. Cooperation with Special Procedures:

a) Cooperation extended to the Special procedures: Islamic Republic of Iran has extended continuous and full cooperation to the then Center for Human Rights and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). To this end, a general standing invitation has been forwarded to all thematic Rapporteurs, Working Groups as well as Independent Experts of the Commission on Human Rights. Accordingly Special Rapporteurs on Freedom of opinion and expression, Rights of Migrants, Violence against Women, Right to Adequate Housing as well as Working Group on Arbitrary Detention visited the Islamic Republic of Iran. It is worth mentioning that prior to the extension of general standing invitation; two visits of previous Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression and Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion to Iran were facilitated. In addition to above-mentioned visits, Islamic Republic of Iran as a neibouring country to Afghanistan and Iraq extended full Cooperation to the Special Representative on Situation of Human Rights in Afghanistan and the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Iraq in fulfilling their mandates.

b) Cooperation with the OHCHR: An invitation was extended to the previous High Commissioner for Human Rights on the occasion of the Sixth Regional Arrangements for Human Rights in Asia and Pacific in 1998 and the Asian Preparatory Meeting for the World Conference against Racism in 2001, at the side line of which

different ways of enhancement of International Cooperation pertaining to the ongoing joint projects were discussed in meetings with respective officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran. It is to be reiterated that the said Regional Meeting successfully managed to adopt an important document, namely "Tehran Framework" constituting the four point general framework in Asia and Pacific for promotion and protection of Human Rights in the region.

Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that, all respective communications of the Special Rapporteurs have been positively responded to and their recommendations also have been followed up in a timely manner.

1.3. Cooperation with monitoring treaty bodies:

The Islamic Republic of Iran's general as well as periodical reports to the Committees on Rights of the Child and Racial Discrimination have been submitted in a timely manner and presented and elaborated successfully. Consequently the concluding observations of the respective monitoring treaty bodies were communicated to the relevant national institutions and governmental entities. With respect to Iran's periodic reports to other Human Rights International Instruments efforts have been made that full and timely cooperation be extended to the respective monitoring treaty bodies.
Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that draft of the last due periodical report to the International Covenant on Economic, social and cultural Rights has already been finalized and is ready for presentation, while the periodical report on International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights is presently being drafted.

1.4. Contribution to International Initiatives:

a) Contribution of Iranian experts to Human Rights Mechanism: The Islamic Republic of Iran has introduced a number of its outstanding experts for assuming different posts within the Human Rights Commission mechanism such as Working Group on Involuntary Disappearances and the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention. The Islamic Republic of Iran has also supported strengthening and promoting of the monitoring treaty bodies, efforts and activities.

b) Holding as well as participating in Regional and International Conferences such as:

The first International Conference on Human Rights in 1968;
The Sixth Asia and Pacific Regional Arrangements for Human Rights in 1988;
The Asia Regional Preparatory Meeting for the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and related intolerances in 2001;
Final Meeting of OIC Senior Experts for Drafting the Declaration on Human Rights in Islam in 1990;

Furthermore, the Islamic Republic of Iran had active participation in and significant contribution to all the UN-sponsored Human Rights International Conferences held during the 1990s, including in particular, the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993, the Second World Conference on women and Development in Beijing in 1995, and the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in 2001 in Durban as well as all preparatory processes and follow-up measures of the above-mentioned conferences.
The Islamic Republic of Iran has also played an outstanding and active role in the process of standard setting for the promotion and protection of human rights within the Organization of the Islamic Conference's framework.

c) A $ 10 thousand donation to the Voluntary Fund for the Victims of Torture. Such donations will be on the future agenda of respective domestic institution.

1.5. Cooperation with OHCHR and support for its activities:

In addition to the cases reiterated in 1.2, prior to the establishment of OHCHR and after the official commencement of its activities, the Islamic Republic of Iran extended its full cooperation to the OHCHR in the context of implementation of human rights joint projects. The said process of cooperation has been further enhanced and promoted during the recent years, particularly in the following areas:

a) Submission of Comprehensive proposal for the enjoyment of technical assistance and advisory services of OHCHR.
b) Launching of a joint national project in the field of Human Rights Education in collaboration with OHCHR and Iran's Ministry of Education as the respective national entity.

c) Successful implementation of a five-year national joint project with a view to enabling and promoting human rights national capacity, which is being carried out with the collaboration of UNDP office in Tehran, different executive bodies and universities. Convening of different human rights seminars throughout the country, strengthening of human rights departments, faculties at various universities, conducting human rights research and studies as well as other educational programs have also been incorporated in the said project.

d) Extension of full cooperation with the OHCHR in successful convening of the Sixth Meeting of Human Rights Regional Arrangements in Asia and Pacific as well as the Asian preparatory meeting of the World Conference against Racism

1.6. Contribution to the Deliberation of International Human Rights Fora:

The Islamic Republic of Iran has played a significant and influential role in all the UN sponsored Human Rights International Conferences and meetings held in 1990s, which led to Iran's qualitative and conceptual contribution to the international processes of human rights standard setting and literature.

The human rights policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran which:

- is in full consistence with its international human rights commitments; and
- is reflective of national and regional particularities as well as cultural, historical and religious backgrounds,

has continuously emphasized the significance of interactive and cooperative approach in resolving international problems of economic, social, cultural and humanitarian nature for the promotion and protection of human rights as stipulated in purposes and principles of the UN Charter as well as avoidance of confrontation and resorting to political pressure.

The Islamic Republic of Iran's firm resolve in the promotion and protection of human rights includes inter-alia, undertaking of measures leading to further convergence of values and principles held by various countries with different cultural, social and historical backgrounds, on human rights question. To this end, while enjoying a rich and ancient cultural heritage and civilization and inspired by values and standards arising from its Islamic beliefs and perceptions, Iran attaches paramount importance to human dignity, accordingly it has undertaken the following measures with a view to facilitating cooperation amongst different countries in the field of human rights:

- The Islamic Republic of Iran is fully convinced that politicization, selective approach and application of double standards significantly impede the genuine promotion of human rights as stipulated in Vienna Declaration and program of action (VDPA 1993) and should be avoided.

To this end, the Islamic Republic of Iran's important and practical contribution was realized in the context of a resolution entitled **"Enhancement of International Cooperation in the field of Human Rights"** which was adopted by the General Assembly in 1996. Ever since, the said resolution has been adopted by consensus as a common initiate of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in UNGA.

- In addition to above-mentioned measure another resolution entitled **"Human Rights and Unilateral Coercive Measures"** was presented by the Islamic Republic of Iran and adopted by the General Assembly in the same year. Amongst other important concepts, the said resolution emphasizes the necessity of fostering a favorable international environment for growth and development of countries, realization of all human rights and specifically underlines the necessity of refraining from unilateral coercive measures.

- The Islamic Republic of Iran has presented the resolution entitled **"Human Rights and Cultural Diversity"** in the year 2000. Ever since, it has been adopted by consensus at consecutive sessions of UNGA. The said resolution effectively contributed to the elaboration and follow-up of the concept of cultural diversity. With a view to the fact that the promotion of mutual recognition and understanding in cultural and social fields through exchange of views and discourse is a prerequisite to interaction and continuous cooperation for achieving the common objective of genuine promotion and protection of human rights, the Islamic Republic of Iran has presented the said resolution in order to help provide a concepnual framework within the United Nations system to serve as a basis for convergence of different perceptions in the field of human rights at the international level.

- The idea of **"Dialogue among Civilization"**, adoption of relevant resolutions and declaration by the consecutive sessions of the UNGA, convening of UN sponsored regional meetings with the contribution of UN secretary General and ultimately the establishment of High level personalities with the objective of furtherance of discussions and interactions amongst cultures as well as discourse between the followers of different religions has been realized in consistence with the Islamic Republic of Iran's above-mentioned initiatives and efforts. The said

initiative of the Islamic Republic of Iran was presented and adopted at a time when the international community was faced with increasing waves of threat to the international peace and security, the roots of which goes back to the mentality of those who believe in clash of civilizations. Therefore due attention and further efforts to the said initiative particularly in the present condition and environment prevailing the world, enjoys a higher priority and importance.

- Efforts towards convergence of Islamic and Western perceptions in the field of Human Rights: With a view to bringing closer different human rights cultures and ideologies, Islamic Republic of Iran has embarked upon some important initiatives. These efforts were initiated with the aim of identification of the common grounds of various entities, and facilitating fraternal, respectable and peaceful interaction amongst the nations. A few significant examples of these efforts include:

- Successful convening of different seminars in this respect;

- Assisting OHCHR in establishing of a high level expert group as well as convening of two meetings of the said group in Geneva where the participants had an ample opportunity to exchange views and identify common grounds as well as areas of differences.

1.7. Commitment to fully support and engagement in deliberations of the Human rights Council:

The Islamic Republic of Iran has actively participated and effectively contributed to the human rights deliberations at the regional and international conferences as well as annual meetings of UNGA Third Committee and UNCHR. It is worth mentioning that the Islamic Republic of Iran has also had significant contribution to and an active role in the discussions leading to the creation of Human Rights Council and, if elected as a member, is determined to enhance, strengthen and continue extending its full cooperation with the human rights council, its subsidiary bodies and mechanisms including the special procedures.

1.8. Commitment to engagement in universal review procedure:

Islamic Republic of Iran is determined to participate in a constructive and transparent manner in deliberations and discussions pertaining to universal review procedure. Therefore, it is prepared to actively participate in the deliberations as soon as it starts.

1.9. Commitment to meaningful engagement of NGO's with the Council:

For the purpose of further promotion and enhancement of the civil society status and the NGO's participation in different civil, political, economic social and cultural spheres and particularly international humanitarian law and human rights, the Islamic republic of Iran has had outstanding and comprehensive activities. The essence of which can be described as follows:

a) The Islamic Republic of Iran's active participation in and valuable contribution to the realization of the mandate of the open-ended Working Group on rationalization and updating of UNGA resolution containing principles and guidelines regulating NGO's interaction with the UN and their participation in the UN sponsored international conferences;

b) Successful assumption the chairmanship of the NGO's Committee of ECOSOC from 2004 to 2006;

Iran has continuously maintained the view that the constructive contribution of NGO's to the deliberations on economic, cultural and social, civil and political as well as international humanitarian and human rights issues is complementary to the efforts and measures undertaken by the Governments and they can play an effective role in achieving peaceful humanitarian goals, reiterated in the Charter of the United Nations.

1.10. Islamic republic of Iran's bilateral efforts and initiatives for the promotion and protection of human rights:

a) Holding of four rounds of human rights dialogues with the European Union with a view to enhancing mutual understanding and communicating and exchanging of the experiences and perceptions of the two parties;

b) Reaching agreement and holding talks with a number of interested countries in different geographical regions such as Switzerland, Russia, Japan, and Australia. This human rights discourse has already born fruit and led to enhanced mutual understanding and increased cooperation in the field of human rights.

2) National Contribution, Pledges and Commitments

2.1: Human Rights National Policy

The Islamic Republic of Iran's national human rights policy is based on the Constitution, which is inspired by the Islamic principles and is in full compliance with its commitments arising from international instruments and duly respects the internationally accepted human rights, values and standards. The principles, prevailing the human rights policy enshrined in the "4th Five Year National Development Programs" clearly represent vigorous attempt aimed at Human Rights Mainstreaming and stipulate full respect for the status and the inherent dignity of human beings from the Islamic perspectives as well as full respect for the citizens' rights. These programs has been designed in a manner to adequately address all economic, social, cultural and civil and political rights of citizens including the rights to development and provide to the full extent possible, the effective enjoyment of the said rights and their promotion and protection. To this end, Islamic Republic of Iran while reviewing, amending and updating the existing regulations, has taken measures for legislations of new and additional new regulations. Simultaneously, creation of national human rights institutions and bodies has effectively been pursued.

To accomplish the goals of the Fourth National Development Program, development of different approaches for national capacity building, strengthening of national institution, human rights education and further attention to the economic, social and cultural rights particularly rights to development has been foreseen. To this end strengthening of civil society, fostering an environment conducive for enhancement of national human rights mechanism such as standing human rights commitee in judiciary, Article 90 commission within the Parliament, organization of National Ombudsman, Bar Association, Deparment of Administrative Justice and Islamic Human Rights Commission as well as drafting and implementation of Citizen Rights bill has been accomplished.

2.2. Identification of principal human rights challenges as well as indication of steps to be taken to meet those challenges:

Although the Islamic Republic of Iran, based its Constitutional principles and international obligations has had outstanding achievements in the promotion and safeguarding of human rights and fundamental freedoms, nevertheless, bearing in mind that there is no country which is immune from human rights challenges and that obstacles on the way of full

realization of all human rights persist in different countries in varying degrees, the Islamic Republic of Iran also is faced with certain shortcomings and difficulties, the roots of which are generally developmental questions and imposition of economic sanctions and application of unilateral policies by certain countries during the past quarter of century. In spite of the said obstacles, the Islamic Republic of Iran within the context of the Fourth National Development Program is committed to take the necessary measures to uphold the highest standards and promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms of all citizens, realization of which is not only dependent on the national endeavors, it is also interlinked with the international support and cooperation particularly with regard to realization of the right to development, as stipulated in the "Declaration on the Right to development".

2.3. Approach to civil society contribution in elaboration and implementation of human rights policy:

The importance of role and contribution of civil society in different fields particularly issues pertaining to human rights policy through provision of their consultative views has precisely and completely been foreseen and reiterated in the forth National Development Program. Furthermore the necessity of continuation of empowerment policy of NGO's has also been underlined in the said program. The vigorous pursuance of enabling policy has led to establishment or enhancing of scope of activities of some 2000 NGO's throughout the country as well as facilitating the acquiring of consultative status for 15 Iranian NGO's.
Furthermore, convening of different seminars and workshops relating to different aspects of NGO's activities in collaboration with OHCHR at local, national and regional levels and in particular hosting of NGO's regional preparatory meetings for the World Conference against Racism is yet another tangible result of above-mentioned policies.

2.4. Commitment to protect against and prevent discrimination in law and practice:

Considering the Islamic Basis of existing laws and regulations in the Islamic Republic of Iran which has accorded the highest priority and attention to the elimination of all forms of discrimination against its citizens and with due regard to the fact that Iran is a party to the International Convention against all Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and related Intolerance, therefore, with respect to standards and measures pertinent to this question, Iran has

initiated considerable number of initiatives aim that overcoming this ugly phenomenon both in legislation of laws and in practice.

2.5. Pledge to uphold the highest standards in promotion and protection of human rights:

As elaborated earlier, since its inception, the Islamic Republic of Iran, has in line with its national law and international commitments exerted maximum endeavors for promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms at national and international levels and feels duty bound, if elected to the Human Rights Council, to intensify and double its continuous and target-oriented efforts in this field."

The above-mentioned pledges and commitments vividly testifies that the Islamic Republic of Iran as a responsible and effective member of international community has continuously exerted its maximum efforts and extended its full and comprehensive cooperation with the respective UN bodies and organs for the promotion and protection of Human rights. Islamic Republic of Iran is firmly determined in the context of implementation of principles reiterated in the Fourth National Development Program to overcome the challenges through strengthening and increasing the national monitoring institutions as well as paving the ground for further promotion of respect for human rights values and standards.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, if elected as Human Rights Council member, is determined to continue its interactive and cooperative approach and double its efforts for genuine promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms through addressing the deficiencies and preventing political abuses of the council mechanisms which will pave the ground for realization of the common and noble goals of international community as stipulated in the purposes and principles of the United Nations.